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“Initiation: The Writing Process of *Affiliated*”

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“Initiation: The Writing Process of *Affiliated*”

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Report

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Abstract

“Initiation: The Writing Process of *Affiliated*”

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“Initiation: The Writing Process of *Affiliated*” documents the writing process of *Affiliated*, an one-hour gang drama set in Wichita, Kansas. The report also explores the background of the writer as well as the writing process of both drafts one and two of the pilot script.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This report will explore the hour-long pilot *Affiliated*, from its background and initial conception through the completed second draft. This report examines and documents my creative process from the first pitch in Spring 2012 through the rewrite from Summer 2013.

Before being admitted into the University of Texas RTF program, I had little background in television writing. The first draft of *Affiliated* was my first attempt at a pilot though the idea had been in my mind for several years. Rather than attempting the draft on my own, I decided to wait until I could be instructed by professors with knowledge and industry experience in television. By learning the professors' processes and the processes used by various television screenwriting manuals, I was able to allow the specifics which spoke to me to marinate for a year as I planned to rewrite my pilot for my thesis project. Initially, I believed the content was extremely original and I scripted it perfectly with my first draft. As I shared the script with industry professionals, I learned there were several areas that could use improvement and I was up for the challenge. The story is very personal to me and I wanted to make sure I had the best possible draft I could have upon graduating.

The writing and subsequent rewrite of *Affiliated* evolved immensely from its conception through the completed second draft. A large reason is the evolution I underwent as a writer - I would not have been able to write the second draft in my first year of screenwriting because I was not mature enough as a writer. By studying television scripts and growing both personally and as a writer, I was able to script a substantially better second draft.

This report will examine the writing process undergone by me and will be broken down in the following chapters : Where's MY Story?; The Genesis; The First Draft; Time Between Drafts; Draft #2; Revelations.

Chapter 2: Where's MY Story?

As I got more into scripted television, I found that the shows that I could get into are few and far in between. Sure there are exceptions, but generally speaking, there are not many interesting shows with a Black protagonist at the center. Being Black myself, I found that my race was underrepresented in scripted television. I did the best I could to find shows I could enjoy but I could not stay invested in most shows past a couple of episodes.

My first semester at the University of Texas, I wrote a script I was not happy with. Dealing with my own identity and voice as a writer, I wrote script with characters that I wanted to be perceived as either White or Black. Reflecting on that script, I feel that was a mistake . I also thought that the bland characters I found on television may have been conceived with this same thought in my mind and in order to separate my writing from everything I loathed about the shows on the air, I had to tell a real and specific story.

With all of these thoughts in mind, I prepared myself to write *Affiliated*.

Chapter 3: The Genesis

When I stepped foot on The University of Texas' campus in the fall of 2011, no one in Austin knew of the long road that I'd taken to get there. All they knew is I was happy to be there because I could not stop smiling. After graduating from The University of Kansas in 2009, I knew I wanted to go to graduate school for screenwriting. With a degree in English and only one creative writing course on my transcript, that dream was far-fetched. I applied to film school in 2009 and 2010 with the same result - denial. I continued writing and even audited a graduate level screenwriting course for a year at KU. In the spring of 2011 I found that my dream had finally come true - I had been admitted to graduate school.

Backtracking even further, I am thankful to have even reached college. I was born and raised in Wichita, Kansas. Gangs and drugs ravaged Wichita in the 90's and my family was no exception. My mother did a great job of keeping my siblings and me involved in church and extracurricular activities but often I reflect on how far I've come from my humble beginnings to now completing my final assignment before earning my Masters Degree. Some of my family members were less fortunate but they are always on my mind and in my heart.

When you are young, you don't necessarily understand everything that goes on around you. My family would meet over my grandmother's house every Sunday after church for dinner. There were several of my older relatives that were in gangs. There were times when I was young, probably first or second grade, that my grandmother's house would get shot up while the whole family was there. Luckily no one in my family was ever harmed, but it was frightening. These memories have always stuck with me growing up. As I got older and I had choices of going

down either the right or wrong path, I always chose the high road because I learned at a young age how your choices affect not only you, but those around you.

I struggled in high school to find what I was passionate about. While I excelled in the classroom and on the football field, I was not passionate for either. I've always been the kind of person that has no problem fitting in and high school was no different. While I was happy on the outside, internally I struggled to find my identity. Many of the kids I went to school with I'd known my whole life. In high school, interests change as do people. Friends of mine became strangers and as I got closer to graduating high school, the number of friends I had lessened. This was due in part to growing apart, but it was primarily due to me trying to find who I was. I spent more time alone, but I had yet to find my passion.

College was much of the same and I regressed with my new found freedom. Partying became more important than anything, and I nearly forgot why I was in college in the first place. Everything changed my junior year when I enrolled into an African American Literature course. Our class read Frederick Douglass' *Narrative* and on the pages I found the most emotional writing I'd ever encountered. Douglass was able to take the traumatic events of his life and express them eloquently and vividly in his writing. It made me feel as if I could do the same thing, not with just with negative emotions, but with all emotions. I tried my hand at creative writing and I enjoyed it a great deal. Whether it was poetry or short stories, I did not care. With every spare moment I had, I was writing. Once I found screenwriting - I finally found my passion.

I quickly learned that having the passion to write screenplays did not guarantee a place in graduate school. The first couple scripts that I wrote were on my own - I had no formal

instruction in screenwriting and it showed on the page. Reflecting now, I understand why I was not admitted into graduate school my first two attempts. I began auditing screenwriting classes in Lawrence, and I began learning how to craft stories through structure. In this class, I wrote a screenplay entitled *Joy & Karma* which would help me be admitted into The University of Texas.

During the fall semester of 2011 at The University of Texas, I struggled to find my voice. For the first time, I wrote a script that I was not strongly connected to and it was evident when I came away with a lengthy first draft. To make matters worse, second semester was a rewriting course, so I was stuck with the script for an entire school year. Spring semester, I also enrolled in a television writing course. In the television writing course, I found my escape. I was able to write my first ever pilot and I chose to write about what I knew all too well.

I thought many times of writing a script about gangs from the things I saw coming up in Wichita, Kansas. Gangs affected my family for nearly a decade and my family has never been the same since. I always felt that if I was going to tell the story, I would tell the story the right way. I would have to face my past and go to a place that I'd never been - prison.

The gang member lifestyle eventually caught up with several relatives of mine. In a matter of months in 1994, my family was on both sides of senseless killings - two of cousins were murdered and two of my uncles were given 25 to life for murder. It was a tough time and though I'd been eligible to see my uncles in prison since I turned eighteen in 2003, it was difficult for me to do because I did not want to see them that way. I'd always kept in touch via letters and over Christmas break my first year at UT, I planned to go see them. I knew that I wanted to write about their story and I felt I should see them and get their blessing before doing so.

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In meeting my uncles for the first time as an adult, they were proud to see that I was making the most of my life. I found that they were not at all proud of their past lives and the hurt they caused to so many people. They did, however, understand how interesting their story is and were more than happy help me with my pilot. After our meeting, I had more than enough information to get started.

For years I'd dreamed of writing this story and I was finally ready to. Their story is so immense that I could never figure out how to squeeze into 120 pages as a feature. I always thought it would be better suited as a television show and in my television class, I was able to test my theory. Everything that I saw as a child and everything that I experienced as an adolescent up to my adult years had prepared to write my most personal script to date. *Affiliated.*

Chapter 4: The Initiation

Just before the 2012 Spring semester began, I got cold feet. I was unsure if I wanted to be so honest with myself and go to the depths of my soul required for me to write *Affiliated*. I did not give much thought to any other pilot ideas over the Christmas break because I was all but sure I would write *Affiliated*. The night before class, I came up with two other pitches - one about an old man trying to stay relevant in the world of sports agents and another about a corrupt booster club at a major university. I pitched all three, hoping that my classmates would bail me out by choosing one of my other ideas but sure enough, everyone thought *Affiliated* was gold.

After I finally decided that I would go with my gang drama, I had to choose what story I wanted to tell in the pilot. My uncles shared so many interesting stories with me that I wished I could just assemble all of the interesting stories into a pilot. While I pulled from several true events, the first thing I did was changed the family name to “Washington.” The show is not a documentary, and many of family members would like to forget about that time in history.

Next I moved to character sketches. The protagonist’s name is William Washington, a sixteen year old high school kid. As I began thinking about his character and the things that he would do over the course of a series (assuming the show ever was picked up), I realized that he is an anti-hero - just like Walter White, Tony Soprano and even Don Draper. William is a high school kid who comes from a good, God-fearing family and still he takes it upon himself to be initiated into a gang. Like my uncles, he’s spoiled and could have anything he wanted - so why join a gang?

Its easy for a person to do wrong when you are surrounded by it. If your mother and father are on drugs, you have every excuse in the world to make bad decisions. When sketching Will, I received several notes in class that he should come from a broken home - his dad should be in jail; his mother should be a drug addict; his family should be living in poverty. There are people in gangs all over the world that come from those exact situations but that was not the case with my uncles and I did not want it to be the case with William. I wanted it to be a more complex, a more curious case.

I have a very big family - my mother has nine siblings. My uncles are the babies out of ten children. So by time they were born, they had aunts giving birth to their nieces and nephews. My uncles tell me that this was difficult for them - it was never their time because they always had to share it with someone else. In joining a gang, they found the love and understanding they felt they lacked at home. I wanted to instill that feeling inside of Will.

I've always thought of *Affiliated* on the grandest scale - one day its going to be made. People will tell you all the time that specs don't get made but if that were true, there would be no shows on television. With that said, I knew that as the show played out, both William and his brother (Corey) would end up in a gang and by the show's end, they would either be dead or in jail because that's typically how the trend goes. I wanted the show to be from Will's perspective - he would be the one to get initiated into the Crips in the pilot. In order to accomplish this this, I made him living in his older brother's shadows - Will is preparing to be a junior in high school as Corey is preparing to leave for college. Corey is the first person in the Washington family to go to college on an athletic scholarship, he's loved by his former high school coach (Will's current

coach) and he's clearly favored by their parents over Will. I made it so that even if Will wanted to, he could never get their attention.

After making Will the odd child out, I needed to find him an outlet. When teenagers feel that they are not understood by their families, they find someone else to fill the void. These outlets range from sports to art but in Will's case, it's his gang-banging-drug-dealing older cousin Royce Hawkins, aka Hawk. Will's parents know Hawk is no good - he's their blood relative and Will is forbidden from hanging out with him. Of course, Will hangs out with him anyway because he can be himself, or at least the person that he believes he is, around Hawk. He exposes Will to things that he would not be exposed to in his own Christian home - drugs, stealing and gangs. The gang members never judge Will as his family does, instead they let him be whoever he wants to be. When Hawk suggests to him that he join the gang, it feels like a no brainer for Will, even though he understands how his family would feel about him doing so. At this point in my writing process, I'm happy - I have what I feel is a strong protagonist and I have internal conflict. What I didn't have was an antagonist and who better to antagonize a gang member than the Wichita Police Department.

As always, I initially thought big picture - we don't necessarily need an antagonist in the first episode, let's just get him in the gang. While that's interesting in itself in reality, it is not enough in television. So I added Officer Evan Anderson - an up and coming police officer who works on the gang unit. Anderson is married with a young child and even attends the same church as the Washingtons. He's a good police officer. Wichita is relatively small compared to the cities overwhelmed by gang violence, but he doesn't care. He wants to stop the gang problems before they get out of hand. I made it so that he's been working alone since his partner

was killed in the line of duty. The streets of Wichita are getting rougher and he needs a partner, even though he does not necessarily want one.

Rather than give Anderson a partner from the Wichita Police Department, I wanted to introduce a character that he could butt heads with. Someone who thinks they know everything there is to know about gangs. So I introduced Diaz, a tattooed cop from Watts, California who had spent years undercover as a gang member. By bringing him from California, where hundreds of gang related murders happen yearly, to Wichita where they seldom happen, that creates instant conflict. Diaz doesn't want to be in Kansas and sure as hell does not want to be helping to stop a gang problem that doesn't exist in his mind.

Every scene that Anderson and Diaz have together for about the first three fourths of the script, they are in conflict - Wichita gangs are a big joke to Diaz and he doesn't want to be there. At all. For Anderson, as a leader in the department, he has to stand his ground with Diaz. He can't allow an outsider to come in and make a mockery of his unit. Eventually, Diaz gets on board. As I resolved their issues, I needed a goal for them as a team.

The overarching goal for the gang unit is to put a stop to gang activity but I needed a goal for the episode. I struggled with this and I went back and forth on what it could be and as I reflect on it, I realize that it is a weakness in the first draft. Rather than having them actively pursuing something, they stumble across Will's apparent initiation. After sketching all the characters it was time to write up a short outline.

In the short outline, I was instructed to focus on the A-story. I wrote a two page treatment focusing on Will's story. I was very excited about the treatment because of the teaser. The teaser is a flash forward of Will being initiated into the gang. The rest of the episode was to be centered

around Corey's going away party. Will deals with every person in his life being solely interested in Corey going away for school. In my mind (and also in Will's), it's hard enough dealing with your brother leaving in the first place. I recall when I left for college how hard it was to leave my younger brother. I wanted to translate that feeling into the script, and I think I did a pretty good job of doing so. It was also important to build this party up so high so that when Will sneaks away to be initiated, no one even noticed. Those were the two big tent poles that I had and I filled in the rest.

Another important scene to have was William's initial interaction with Anderson and Diaz. They respond to the hospital after William is jumped into the gang. Anderson and Diaz have much bigger fish to fry than the lowest gang member on the totem pole, but it was essential that they meet in the pilot. It is only a brief encounter but definitely a preview of things to come. After having the A-story pretty much worked out, I was ready to move on to the step outline and put it all together.

Once I arrived to the step outline [See Appendix A], I realized that while I had the main A-story, I did not have much more. I wanted the the story to be focused on William, but I also needed for Anderson's storyline to be connected and be building toward William so by the end of the episode, the audience would be able to see how they were connected. Once I started piecing the story together, the stories were complete but they were separate. I needed to add layers that connected William to Anderson.

I wanted Anderson to be a family man and a religious man. This immediately gave William (more specifically his family) and Anderson a connection. I made them members of the

same church to show just how small Wichita is, especially the Black community. Even with this layer, the stories were still pretty separated. Regardless, I moved on.

Just as any other story, my protagonist needed a love interest. I created Ayesha Sanders, a good girl who goes to the same church and school as William. I wanted her introduction to William on the screen to be while he was doing something bad, to set her up as being the good girl who falls for the bad guy. As cliché as this tactic is, it really felt right for her character. After I set up her seeing Will being bad, it was important that their next scene together be when she expresses her interest in him - she knows exactly what she's signing up for. Will has to hide his true identity around his family, but I wanted him to be his self around everyone else, especially his gang and his love interest. Will's character essentially wrote itself - after all the conversations I'd had with my uncles, Will felt real to me and I felt as if I knew him personally. Anderson's storyline was more difficult to plot.

I've been a teenager and I've been around gangs but I haven't spent much time with police. In fact, I've tried my hardest to stay clear of police. Most of what I know about police comes from television and film. Instead of focusing on Anderson the police officer, I focused on Anderson the person. I wanted Anderson to be a good person who cares about the world around him because of his family's safety. By giving him a wife and young child, I wanted his internal goal to be to protect them at all cost because I feel if I had a family, that'd be my primary goal. This was an easy motivation to give Anderson. With Anderson's motivation squared away, I was ready to put piece the story together.

After figuring out Will and Anderson's motivations, I still only had the skeleton of the episode. I still needed to populate the outline with the rest of the scenes. Will's relationship with

Hawk is the most important relationship outside of his immediate family. Hawk is the most important supporting character: in a way Will wants to be more like Hawk than his own brother. I put them in several scenes together in the outline to show Hawk's importance to Will. Hawk cares about Will deeply also (though he is not the kind of person to come out and say so). I wanted to put them in a situation that shows Hawk would never allow anything to happen to Will that did not happen to him first. Though Hawk influences Will to do wrong, he bails Will out of the situation when all appears to be lost.

Will's relationship to Corey is also important. Corey expects a lot out of Will - he's placed high standards on himself and he expects the same out of Will. Corey is not nearly as naive as his parents. Their parents know that Hawk is bad news, but they would never expect anything like that from Will because he was not raised that way and also because he has the perfect role model in Corey to look up to. Corey on the other hand, knows that Will does what he wants, including hanging out with Hawk even though he is not supposed to. I initially struggled with Corey's age - he is such a good character that I did not want to make him go off to college in the first episode. At the same time, I felt that Corey needed to be at a distance for Will to truly flourish into the character that he has the potential to be.

Katherine and Barry (Will's parents) are proud, working class people. While they are not formally educated, they both work hard to provide for their family. While their hard work is a gift, it is at times a curse, especially in regards to Will. Will is crying for their attention and their love. It's not that they don't love him and don't want to give him attention, they are just busy with work and extremely overwhelmed with the successes Corey has found. I drew on my own grandparents for the inspiration of Katherine and Barry, so much so that I envision them in the

roles. My grandparents have always been model citizens in the church and community. My uncles had no excuses for the choices they made and it was important for this to be true for Will. As many times as I got notes that they should be the opposite, I shot them down. I was always open to suggestions for other aspects of the characters and stories, but the parents I could not budge on. In my opinion, it is what makes Will a complex character - he has everything he wants and needs at his disposal and yet he still makes poor decisions.

After sketching the characters and writing both short and extended outlines, I was almost ready to move to the draft. I assumed that after getting the first draft down, I would go back and make all my changes. For me, it feels good to get a draft down so that I can go back and make changes. With that, I began writing my first ever pilot.

Chapter 5 - The First Draft of my First Pilot

Our first assignment of the semester was to write a spec script of an existing show. The show I chose to spec was *Breaking Bad*. I studied several episodes, including the pilot. I recall being intrigued with the teaser - a flash forward of Walt on the run and recording a video to his family explaining. Then he points a gun directly at the camera as wailing police sirens approached. From that moment, I was on board and I wanted to know more about Walter White. I wanted my show to open with the same punch. I wanted my teaser to be just as strong as *Breaking Bad's*.

The most pivotal moment in the pilot of *Affiliated* is the initiation. I thought it would be interesting to open with the initiation. I wanted to brand the show as a gang drama and I wanted it to be undeniable from page one. Before seeing Will get brutally beaten, I put him in the car with Hawk - but the first time we meet them, we don't know who they are. They ride in a car together, passing a bottle of malt liquor back and forth. They converse and it is apparent that they are acquainted, though how they are acquainted is left unanswered. Hawk is comfortable and in his element as he drives but Will is uncomfortable - almost as if he knows he has no business being in the car with Hawk. They reach their destination, an empty field, and they get out the car.

Once out in the field, I wanted to make the audience to feel as if they were with Will. Will follows a couple paces behind Hawk until they approach a group of thugs in what appears to be the middle of the night. My goal was to relate how terrifying this would be. Will had been drinking on the ride over so he's already out of his mind. He's with Hawk, who is described as a

shady looking character. Then they approach a group of thugs who appear to be protecting their turf. If I were in this situation, my first thought would be to run. I gave the impression that Will was considering running but right before he can, he's approached by Hawk, the only familiar face in the field.

Rather than having Hawk explain what was going on or getting ready to happen, I just have him and Will stand off for a brief moment. As Will soaks in what is happening around him, Hawk punches him. My hope was that this would catch the audience off guard and leave them wondering what is going on. Will instinctively hits Hawk back and now the two people who rode to the field together are fighting. To add more confusion, the other three guys in the field join Hawk in beating up Will. After they beat him unconscious, they leave him there. With that, I end the teaser.

After starting with such a jarring opening, I wanted to contrast that with Will's everyday life. I open act one four days earlier with Will at home getting ready for football practice with Corey. Corey is older and getting ready to leave for college in a few days. In the meantime, Corey has been working out with his old high school and Will's current high school. I made this decision to show that even though Corey has graduated, Will still can't get out of his brother's shadow. At football practice instead of the coach praising Will's work ethic and building up his self esteem, he praises Corey even though he is well on his way. I explained the best I could how Will felt in this scene - he just wants half of the praise that Corey gets.

After practice, the Washington brothers go home where we meet their parents for the first time. As Corey showers, Katherine asks Will if there is anything that Corey has asked for - she wants to get him a going away present for school. Will says that Corey has mentioned the latest

pair of Air Jordans, but Will wants a nice pair of shoes also to start school in. Not only does she tell Will that he has to wait for his sneakers, she also gives him money to go get Corey's to surprise him for his going away party. Will argues, but once again he's put second to Corey. His mother tells him to catch a ride with a friend from school and not to ride with Hawk. What does Will do? He calls up Hawk almost immediately after his mother tells him not to.

While writing this scene, I wanted to introduce Katherine, show her favoritism towards Corey and show her disdain for Hawk. Hawk is her blood relative and the fact that she doesn't want her son hanging out with him shows that he is bad news. With Will doing calling Hawk anyway, I wanted to show his rebellion. He's calling out for his mother's attention, but she does not hear his cry. While he's with Hawk, my objective was to show why exactly his mother did not want Will hanging with him.

Once Will is picked up by Hawk, the audience finds that he's the antagonist from the teaser scenes. His relationship with Will does not at all feel like it did in the teaser when Will ends up lying unconscious in a desolate field. Hawk does tell Will before they go to the mall to get the shoes that they have to make a run. They smoke a joint and set off. This sets up the duality of Will - he's nowhere the person at home as he is with Hawk. I wanted to leave the audience wondering *Who is this kid?* by the end of act one.

Anderson's arc in act one is much smaller - the point of view is Will's for the majority of the act. In act one, we meet Anderson and find that he's a square gang unit police officer who hasn't had a partner for a while. We find that he's getting a new partner who's coming in from Watts. I wanted to put Anderson with his complete opposite, so I created Officer Diaz - a cop from Watts, California who'd spent the last couple years undercover with a street gang. Once

they meet, it becomes apparent that Diaz doesn't want to be there and he's a pain in Anderson's ass.

Act two opens with Hawk and Will going to Pick's house - Pick is the leader of the Crips and he's also from the teaser. While Hawk exchanges money for drugs, Will sits quiet and paranoid from the drugs. Once Will and Hawk leave, Hawk explains that Pick has given the OK for Will to be initiated into the gang. This is an important scene because it is the moment that Will is given a choice - a choice to continue down the straight and narrow or to follow in Hawk's footsteps. The next scene shows Will's choice through his actions.

In act two, they arrive at the mall, Hawk suggests that Will try on the shoes that he's buying for Corey. Will doesn't have the money to buy the shoes and he's naive enough to believe that Hawk will buy them for him. Simultaneously, we meet Ayesha Sanders for the first time - Will's love interest. She's into him which he may or may not notice because he is high. After they say their hellos, she goes back to try on her own shoes. After the clerk leaves Will and Hawk with their shoes, Hawk urges Will to walk out with them. Will resists initially because he knows better. But what's worse - being caught attempting to steal or refusing your older cousin who's also in a gang? Will and Hawk exit the store and are caught on their way out. Hawk knocks out the clerk and they get away - Ayesha watches the whole scene and is even more into Will afterward.

While Hawk is clearly a bad person, he protects Will and also provides him with the shoes that his mother would not. Not only does Will get the shoes for Corey and himself, he also gets to pocket the money his mother gave him for Corey's shoes. Will is not active in this scene but it is the point. Sixteen is such a vulnerable age in my opinion. I wanted to present him with

choices - his reactions were key. He could have said 'no' to Hawk and he probably wouldn't have given it much mind. But he wants the shoes and he trusts that Hawk won't let anything happen to him. He gets everything he wants and his loyalty shifts more to Hawk than it ever has up to this point.

Anderson gets to know Diaz better in act two. Diaz thinks that Wichita's gang problem is a joke and he gives Anderson a hard time about it every time he gets a chance. It would have been easy to show gangs in California but being from Wichita and seeing what I saw coming up, I wanted to keep it personal but I also wanted to address what I knew audiences would think. This was my logic behind Diaz's character.

In act three, I wanted to show how religious the Washington family is and also how big their family is. At their church, filled with an all Black Baptist congregation, Corey is honored for receiving a scholarship to play football. I grew up in the Baptist church and it is a extremely communal - when something happens to one member, it happens for everyone. After ending act two with Will running out of a store with stolen merchandise, I wanted to juxtapose the scene with him sitting in a church. He's a lost and confused soul but rather than anyone notice the demons that he's fighting with, their focus is on Corey. Every person older than Will up until this point essentially ignores him. The only person that shows him any love is Hawk.

After church, I put the family at the Washington's house to continue their celebration of Corey going to school. After Will presents Corey with his gift, the family's attention again reverts back to Corey. Writing this scene was my favorite outside of the teaser. There's a knock at the door and its Hawk for Will. No one in the whole family notices as Will walks out of the house to go get initiated into a gang. Rather than show the initiation again, I cut to the field with

a group of teenagers approaching Will's battered body. We are left to assume that they called for help.

While every decision up to this point may not have been explicit or not, my goal was by this point for the audience to at least understand why Will would join a gang. He could not buy attention from his family so he joins a gang because they notice him. In talking to my uncles, this was a part of their psyche and it is my opinion that many kids join gangs for this reason. Are there other reasons why people join? Sure. And perhaps other reasons could be explored if the show was picked up. But for the pilot, I wanted it to be because Will is ignored.

By act three in Anderson's story, we find that he attends the same church as the Washingtons and we meet his wife and son. After church, Anderson's wife, Emma, suggests that Anderson invite Diaz over for dinner. In the dinner scenes, we see that Diaz and Anderson are beginning to grow on each other. At times I felt, I should play their drama up more but also I wanted them to be cool with each other because they are responsible for each other's lives.

In the fourth and final act, Will wakes up in the hospital surrounded by his family. For the first time all episode, he has their attention. They want to know what happened to Will. Of course he lies - he says he was mugged while out on a walk. His parents buy this but Corey does not. Corey is upset and threatens not leave for school the following day. This again shifts the attention back to Corey - Will can't even get everyone's undivided attention after he's been beaten within an inch of his life. This act is also the first time Will crosses paths with Anderson and Diaz for the first time.

Anderson is aware the field where Will was found in is Crip turf used for initiations. He tries to explain to the Washingtons he believes Will has been jumped into the gang but they

won't hear it. They send him away and even Diaz is skeptical considering what seems to be a wholesome family. Anderson and Diaz hang around the commissary and end up running into Hawk, Pick and a host of other Crips after they eat. While they can't prove that Will is a member of the Crips, they can sure as hell prove that he's affiliated.

Chapter 6 - Time Between Drafts

After completing my first draft of *Affiliated*, the script was well received. My professor loved it and nominated it for the Humanitas Award. It was also shared with a couple agents and production companies. Nothing came of the script but it provided me with some much needed confidence and validation. It also made me feel as if the script was as good as it could possibly be, which could not have been further away from the truth.

I did not look at my script from summer 2012 until May 2013. I'd been in several more screenwriting classes, led screenwriting discussions and watch all the episodic television that I could in my spare time. In writing the draft and studying all-time great TV shows, I realized that I was much more into episodic television than features. I also learned a lot more about television and what makes episodes, more specifically pilots, work. By time I picked *Affiliated* again, I realized that it could improve dramatically but I still was not completely sure how I could do so. I soon decided that *Affiliated* would be my thesis script.

When I met my thesis committee to talk about my script, it was good to get notes from two other distinguished professors. While they enjoyed the script, they agreed that Will needed stronger motivation to join the gang. They did not believe that Will being ignored by his family was quite enough for him to make such a drastic decision to join a gang. I completely agreed and we immediately started kicking around ideas on how to make it better. I set off to start working on a new short outline [See Appendix B].

The biggest change that needed to be made was to focus more on Will - his family is interesting and they could be explored more in depth as the show progresses but in the teaser, it needed to be focused on Will and why he joins the gang. I started thinking - it's one thing to be

ignored by your family but its another to disappoint them and be shunned. I thought how can I get Will's family to be disappointed in him and I thought what if he quit the football team? In order for this to really be a blow, I needed to set up football as being bigger.

Instead of Corey still being around getting ready for Junior College like he is in the first draft, I put him at a division-1 school preparing for his first game as a true freshman. The previous year, he set a city-league record for rushing yards - by making Corey distant yet ever present, it gave Will even more to live up to. Will's goal is now to be better than his big brother and break his record, but I raised the stakes even higher - he still hasn't even earned the position. Will is in camp trying out for Corey's old position so that he can break his record, which would make his father extremely proud. This gives Will a concrete goal, something that he did not have in the first draft. With Will's initial goal (first act) squared away, I needed to raise the stakes in the Police Department thread as well.

With Will's storyline being an origin story, I thought it would be better if Anderson's story somehow mirrored Will's. I thought instead of their already being a Gang Unit, they could be starting one. Before they could start a Gang Unit, I needed a reason why. In the first act, I introduce Anderson the first time showing up to work and finding out that he's getting a new partner - just about the least interesting way a police officer can be introduced. In the second draft, since I wanted the gang unit to be starting up, I needed reasons why they'd be starting one up. Initially the show is set in the '90s, I set it back to the '80s because gangs were spreading across the nation (Also to add texture with Ronald Reagan and other happenings in the United States at the time).

The first time the audience met Anderson in the second draft, I thought he should be responding to something gang related. I settled on a gang related shooting and initially I had a gang member being shot. While that's interesting, I later thought it would be more interesting if a little girl was shot and we explored Anderson's reaction to that. With this set up, he would be bound to show his character, something that he did not do in his introduction in the first draft. Anderson now had the motivation that he needs to lobby for a Gang Unit.

With Will's goal set up and me knowing that I wanted him to disappoint his parents, I kept working at his story. I thought, what if he lost the battle for the position he was going after? How would he respond? So I put him in that situation. I wanted Will to be the kind of character who wants exactly what he wants and nothing else. So even if he was given a starting position, if it was not the position he wanted, he wouldn't work hard. If he didn't work hard, his coach would get on his case. If his coach got on his case, then he would quit. And this is how I played it out in the outline. Does Will tell his parents that he quits the team? Of course not - that would be too easy.

Anderson's lobbying for the Gang Unit works and the Captain gets it approved. Anderson, who is ambitious in his own right, wants to head the unit but he's young. I thought that instead of a new partner being brought in, a new guy could be brought in for the position that Anderson wants. This situation lends much more opportunity for drama. By time Long (formally Diaz) is brought in, Anderson doesn't like him and he's never met the guy. When Long is a jerk, the feeling this time is mutual.

After I got Will off the football team, I needed a natural way for his parents to find out. Ayesha was just a secondary character in the first draft with not much consequence. In the

second draft, I wanted to do more with her character. I made her the girlfriend of the character (Marty) who takes Will's position. She's still interested in Will, but her situation is now more complicated. By the time Marty confronts Will about talking to his girlfriend, the ensuing fight would be about football just as much as it is about Ayesha. Whenever you are suspended from school, your parents are called. When the Washington's show up to pick Will up, they also find out that he quit the football team. And now they are disappointed. Will is put on punishment - he was supposed to go see Corey's first game but now he will be left home alone while his parents go. He's still being ignored in this draft of the outline, but this time its intentional because of his actions. Hawk comes over to visit with Will and this is when Will decides he wants to be initiated into the gang, versus the first script when he's recruited. Overall, I wanted Will to have more agency in the second draft. Joining the gang is such a pivotal moment that it needed to be his decision.

Anderson and Long were equals in rank in the first draft. By making Long a superior, it also lent itself to more conflict. In the outline, I wanted Long to delegate the assignment of creating files of all known gang members and affiliates to Anderson. After Anderson completes the tasks, Long is not totally satisfied, even though Anderson does exactly what he asks of him. Not only was I building more and more conflict between the officers, I was setting their story up to intersect with Will's better. In the first draft, they happened across Will after he's initiated. In the second draft I wanted them to be compiling files so by the end of the episode, Will could have his own file.

Will feels like crap after his parents leave for Corey's game without him. As he sits around the house alone, he calls up Ayesha and says that he will come to her back to school

party, but she has to pick him up. I wanted there to be lots of sexual tension with between them but I didn't want them to have sex in the pilot. I set it up so just before they could have sex, Hawk comes to pick Will up for his initiation. This way, both of Will's wants - to join the gang and Ayesha - come to a crossroads. He chooses the initiation but it leaves a good question: What will happen to Will and Ayesha?

I needed there to be a breaking point with Anderson and Diaz. In the first draft, Anderson just took his shit. In this draft, I gave Anderson more agency and bitterness, so much so that he wouldn't stick around and take Long's crap. I also wanted to make Anderson spend more time with Long - I made him come in on his day off to show Long around and work in the office on the gang files. Anderson already doesn't want to be there and he certainly would not want to take his crap. I wanted to build all of this up so that Anderson would walk out on the job, not to quit, but just to say 'screw you Long.' This, along with Will being initiated was all set up heading into the fifth act of my outline and I was happy with the way it was coming along.

I wanted to the final act to essentially stay the same - Will in the hospital with his family at his side when he woke. This time, I wanted his family to be dealing with the guilt of leaving him home alone. Also, I wanted to Corey to just now be introduced in order to keep the focus on Will for the entire episode. Will's desires and actions drive the episode and make it stronger in the second draft for this reason. The same can be said about Anderson. Once Anderson and Long respond to the hospital this draft, they have been building cases on gang members and affiliates the entire episode so by time I closed the episode, Will could actually have a file.

After writing the first draft of *Affiliated*, I was much too close to the material. I thought that every scene and every character were developed as strongly as they could be. By taking

time away from the draft, I was able to look at it with fresh eyes. That combined with everything I'd learned over the course of that year gave me a completely new perspective. I was ready to write the second draft of a script.

Chapter 7 - Draft #2

After writing a much more extensive outline for the second draft [See Appendix C], I found that writing the draft was much easier. The hardest part about writing the draft was finding the time. I moved to Los Angeles the last week of May and all I wanted to do was sight-see. I also started an internship at Josephson Entertainment, so I found myself pretty busy. Finally, I put everything aside and took six consecutive days to write the draft.

The six days were for the the teaser plus five acts. The first draft *Affiliated* was a teaser and four acts; it ended up running a little short, around 47 pages. A note I received from my thesis committee was to extend it by an act, which was easy to do because I added so much more story. I wanted to keep the teaser pretty close to how it was in the first draft so I skipped it and left in for last. When I came back to it, I tweaked it to fit the new draft.

Act one in the second draft focuses primarily on Will the football player. I wanted to show that he was lazy and felt entitled to the tailback position. I also introduced his competition (Marty) and the love interest (Ayesha). By removing Corey from the early acts in the script, I had much more time on the page to explore Will, which is more important since he's the show's protagonist. I had more freedom to write Will without Corey around, which gave me a better chance to find out who Will was. In the football scenes, he's indifferent - he doesn't have the killer's mentality. He would rather hang out and shoot the crap with the boys than be a leader.

Anderson was more fun to write in the second draft as well. In the first draft, I gave him a family and it ended up being a really safe move. Draft two, I made him single and more reckless. The first time we meet him, he roughs up a gang member who has just been shot. In

the same scene, he finds a gun in the victim's car. I wanted to show that while he's reckless, he is capable of doing good police work. By the end of the first act, he gets information out of the victim and has enough for the Captain to petition for a Gang Unit.

In act two, my objective was to get Will off the football team. I didn't want this to become a show about football and I didn't want to waste too much time in those scenes. It would have been easy for Will to quit the team if he were not starting at all so I gave him a starting position at fullback instead of tailback. In the practice scene after he's given his new position, Will does not give 100% and his coach gets on his case. Instead of being motivated to do better, it pisses him off and he quits. By the end of act two, I put Will at a crossroad - he's sitting in the car with Hawk and the coach gives him a chance to come back. Without hesitation, Will blows the coach off and that's the end of his high school football career. That day (and act two) ends with Will being at a house that gets shot up and seeing a friend be paralyzed from a gun shot - the point of no return.

I wanted Anderson to find out that a Gang Unit was being started up in act two. I also wanted him to suppress his desire to head the unit until he finds out that it was given to Long. With a stronger set up of his character in act one, Anderson flowed onto the page in act two. He wants to prove his worth but he's still young and very green. The captain is aware of these facts and brings in Long, who is a veteran. I introduced Briggs and Shumpert in this draft as well - if there is going to be a new gang unit, they are going to need more than Anderson and Long. My thoughts for Briggs and Shumpert is that they would also serve as comic relief.

Act three is a pivotal moment for Will. I wanted his parents to find out he quit the team and shun him for doing so. I built Will's relationship with Ayesha in the first two acts as well.

She is clearly a character that he has feelings for, but he finds out that she's dating Marty. By the time Will fights Marty, I wanted it to be for Marty taking his spot just as much as Will talking to his girl. In the scene with the Washingtons in the principal's office, I put the coach there so he could express his concerns with Will fighting and quitting the team - which the Washingtons have no clue about. Barry and Katherine are beyond upset, they are disappointed. For the rest of the act, they are cold to Will, the last thing he needs at such a vulnerable place in his life. I end the act with him telling Hawk that he's ready to be initiated into the Crips.

Anderson and Long's tension builds in act three. My goal was to show how hard it is taking orders from someone when you feel you should have their job. Anderson busts his hump to get work done and Long is never satisfied. I also set up a date with Anderson and Officer Landry, one of few women in the Wichita Police Department. I thought it would be more interesting to have two officers in a relationship than Anderson having a wife and kid at home.

In the first draft, the initiation is centered around Corey's going away party. As I read over the first draft, I felt that Will's storyline played second fiddle to Corey's. I was too heavy handed with the golden child angle. By putting Katherine and Barry at Corey's game out of town, it left Will all alone. In act four he has the opportunity to bed Ayesha, but it's interrupted by Hawk. I wanted Hawk in some ways to assume the parental/guardian role for Will at this point. I had to rewrite the fourth act several times to get it this right. At first, I had Will and Ayesha have sex. I changed it so that Hawk interrupts them just before they can - similar to the way parents are always around for the most inopportune times. Will answers the door with an attitude, but quickly backs down when he finds Hawk, much like kids do with their parents when they overstep their boundaries.

Anderson has his breaking point with Long in act four - he comes in on his day off to show him around town and finally has enough of his crap. Rather than take anymore, he leaves, defying his superior officer. In the first draft, Anderson did not have any real conflict in the entire episode. I amped up his relationship with Long and made Long impossible to deal with. I get him alone with Landry and they seal the deal but that situation is a lot messier than Long realizes - she's married but separated, unbeknownst to Anderson.

In the second draft, I had a much stronger set up in the first four acts as I headed into the final act. By the time Anderson and Long get to their scene with Will, we know how important it is to them - their goal is to find as many known gang members as they can to put a stop to the gang problem before it gets worse. When Will lies about it being gang related, it's a bigger moment when they see the Hawk and Pick on their way to his room because they have been building files on them all episode. I was real excited writing the tag - I intercut scenes with Will at school with the Crips and Anderson creating a file for Will. I spent the whole episode setting up both characters and it tied everything up real neatly. If the show was ever picked up, there are so many directions the show could go, which excites me more than any other project I wrote at UT.

Chapter 8 - Revelations

As I finish my final assignment as a MFA screenwriting student at the University of Texas at Austin, I am proud of how much I've grown as a writer, as well as a person. I've had the opportunity to workshop with several talented students and learn under knowledgeable professors. I have no doubt that UT was the perfect place for me and I'm glad I was afforded the opportunity to attend.

I believe I improved most in conquering my fears to tell the stories that I want to tell as an writer. Many of the ideas that I have had such as *Affiliated*, come from a dark place, a place that I was frightened to revisit. By conquering that fear, I came away with a script that I'm proud of. I also came away with the confidence that I could dig deeper to find more stories.

This past year, I was lucky enough to TA for three undergraduate screenwriting classes. I've always appreciated the extra mile my professors have been willing to go for me as I pursue a career in screenwriting and it was a fulfilling experience to be able to give back to students at UT. Once I establish myself as a writer and attain more knowledge on screenwriting and film, I could see myself teaching.

I had the opportunity to intern for Josephson Entertainment this summer. Learning about scripts is one thing, but working at a production company exposed me to a completely different side of screenwriting as a profession. Writers were in and out of the office, both pitching and interviewing for upcoming writer jobs. It showed me that being a good writer is just part of the package - you have to be able to sell yourself. I spent the majority of my time covering scripts

submitted by agents - I learned that every “professional writer” can’t write and it gives me hope that I will get my chance when the time is right.

Appendix A - Affiliated - 1st Draft - Step Outline

Note: Several changes were implemented in between outline stages and drafts of scripts.

TEASER

1. EXT. FIELD - EVENING

We see a NERVOUS TEENAGER, dressed in slacks and a dress shirt, walking with a BIGGER GUY, dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, a couple years older than him. They talk and pass a forty ounce of malt liquor back and forth. They are met by three guys that you wouldn't want to fuck with. At first, they seem upset for the two guys trespassing on their turf, but then we realize that they know the bigger guy and perhaps the nervous teenager as well. Out of nowhere, the bigger guy turns around punches the nervous teenager. The nervous teenager staggers back then instinctively fights back. The other three take jump in and he has no chance. They beat the shit out of him, stomping him after he hits the ground. They run off, leaving him to drown in a pool of his own blood.

ACT I

2. INT. WASHINGTON HOUSE - WILL AND COREY'S ROOM - MORNING

Two days earlier. WILLIAM WASHINGTON (16) lies in his bed, asleep. He is awoken by his brother COREY (18), who screams from the kitchen that they will be late to football conditioning if William doesn't get up. When Will gets up, we see that he is the nervous teenager that got his ass kicked in the teaser.

3. EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Football conditioning for the Wichita High School Southeast Buffalos. Corey runs next to Will, pushing him to finish first in wind-sprints. The coach tells his high football team how dedicated Corey is for participating in conditioning even though he reports to his college team the following week. "That's why he's gonna make it."

4. INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - GANGS UNIT - DAY

EVAN ANDERSON (30), a clean-cut Gang Unit Police Officer, moseys into work late. All of his colleagues inform him that CAPTAIN McDOWELL is looking for him.

5. INT. CAPTAIN McDOWELL'S OFFICE - DAY

CAPTAIN McDOWELL (50), who is the Head Honcho of the Wichita Gang Unit, tells Anderson that a new officer has transferred from California and he will be his new partner. Anderson is

resistant to the idea because his last partner was killed in the line of duty, but it's not up for debate. His partner reports today.6. INT. WASHINGTON HOUSE - DAY Will and Corey return from conditioning and their parents BARRY (62) and CATHERINE (60) are home from work. Corey beats Will to the shower so Will has a sit down with Catherine. With Corey's going away to college party tomorrow, Catherine asks Will if Corey has mentioned anything that he wants lately, fishing for going away gifts. Will tells her that he's been asking for the latest Michael Jordan sneakers. She gives him the money so that he can go to get them, but tells him she does not want him riding to the mall with his cousin Royce " 'cause he's trouble." She tells him to go with his friend June down the street instead.

7. INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Will and JUNE (17) play Nintendo. June is a square and he's taking the game way too serious, while Will doesn't seem to really care, constantly looking out the window. Finally, a car pulls up outside and Will runs out and gets in the car. It pulls off.

ACT II

8. INT. HAWK'S CAR - DAY

Will rides as ROYCE "HAWK" HAWKINS (19) drives. Hawk has to make a couple stops before they go to the mall. Hawk informs DUBB (as he calls Will) that the Big Homies have given the OK for Will to be "put on the set." Will immediately tenses up and asks details about what it's like and how much it hurts. Hawk shrugs it off as if it's not a big deal because "pain is temporary but being a Crip is for life. You'll be aite."

9. INT. POLICE STATION - ANDERSON'S CUBICLE - DAY

Anderson sits at his desk filling out paper work when SANTONIO CLARK (27) enters and introduces himself to him. Clark is a big cocky motherfucker with jail-house tattoos covering his forearms. And oh yeah, He's not friendly... At all.

10. INT. SOUTHEAST CARRY-OUT - DAY

Anderson and Clark eat lunch at a local restaurant. Anderson briefs him on what he should know about Wichita gangs. Clark is not impressed - he was stationed in Watts, California. He's "seen it all... to the max."

11. INT. HAWK'S CAR - DAY

While Hawk is inside a house selling weed, Will sits in the car, both anxious and frustrated. Hawk finally comes out and is ready to go to the mall.

12. INT. TOWNE EAST SQUARE - SHOE STORE #1 - DAY

Will and Hawk enter and ask if they have the Jordan's in Corey's size. They are sold out. Will rushes out and towards the next shoe store.

13. INT. SHOE STORE #2 - DAY

This store has the size. The clerk gives them to Will and tells him he can pay at the counter whenever he's ready to check out. Before Will can head to the counter, Hawk suggest that they just walk out and Will keep the money his mother gave him. Will doesn't really want to, but peer pressure's a motherfucker. As they make their way towards the exit, the clerk stops Will and asks him what he's doing. Before Will can answer, Hawk knocks the clerk out with one punch. They run out of the store and out of the mall.

ACT III

14. INT. ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

Sunday. Will sits next to Catherine and Corey dozing of in church. Barry sits near the front of the church with the other Deacons. Anderson enters late with his wife EMMA (28) and young son GORDON(Is it too much if they go to the same church?). They sit in the back. PASTOR SHAW prays for Corey, the church's only member going off to college this year, after his sermon. Will is visibly upset as everyone else seems to be so excited about Corey leaving.

15. EXT. ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

We meet other members of the large Washington family. Everyone agrees to meet over Catherine and Barry's for dinner.

16. INT. WASHINGTON HOUSE - DINING ROOM/DEN - DAY

The children eat at the dining room table while everyone who can eat without making a mess eat in the den on the sofas and floor.

17. INT. DEN - LATER

After everyone is settled from dinner, Will gives Corey his present. He breaks down crying, sad that Corey is leaving for college. Corey assures him that his school is close and he will make frequent visits back home. Just as Will calms himself down, there's a knock at the door. One of his young cousins answer the door and tell Will its for him. It's Hawk and... it's time.

ACT IV

18. INT. HOSPITAL - WILL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Will is in a hospital bed when he regains consciousness. His face is bruised and swollen and he has internal bleeding. His family express their concerns and ask what happened. Will tells him that some guys tried to rob him and beat him up when he didn't have any money. Corey is so upset he threatens not to report to school the following morning. Will tells him it could've happened to anyone and he will be alright.

19. INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The doctor slips into the hallway after Will wakes up. He calls Anderson (this conversation will be intercut) and tells him that they have what looks like a gang initiation on their hands. Anderson says he "will come as soon as he can tomorrow."

20. INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Anderson puts his son to bed before getting intimate with his Emma.

21. INT. HOSPITAL - WILL'S ROOM - DAY

Catherine, Barry and Corey are visiting with Will as Hawk comes in to visit. It's awkward and he can tell that he's not welcome. Before he leaves, he whispers to Will that he'll be right around the corner at the gang house and to call him after his parents leave. As he walks out, Anderson and Clark enter. They want to speak to Catherine and Barry.

22. INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Anderson informs the Washington's that he believes that Will has been initiated into a gang. He's seen many members put on in that same field. Barry is immediately angered by this, claiming that they "are a God-fearing family and there's no way my son is in nobody's gang." They ask Anderson and Clark to leave.

23. INT, WILL'S ROOM - DAY

Will and Corey share an emotional good-bye before Catherine and Barry leave to take Corey to school. Will wipes his face and calls Hawk to tell him he can come back.

24. EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Anderson and Clark sit in the car exchanging life stories. They find that they might have more in common than they thought. Just as Anderson prepares to leave, he sees a large group of known Crips entering the hospital - His assumption was right.

25. INT. WILL'S ROOM - DAY

The gang, including the three Big Homies, show Will love and wish him well in a tough love kind of way. They give him a Blue Bandana and teach him the Crip Handshake. It's officially --- Will is a Crip.

Appendix B - Affiliated - 2nd Draft - Short Outline

Note: Several changes were implemented in between outline stages and drafts of scripts.

Act One - During an early morning practice, WILL WASHINGTON is outperformed in running back drills by MARTY, though Will arrogantly believes the spot is his. After practice, COACH ATWATER tells the team to have a good first day of school and that the varsity depth chart will be posted before the second practice after school.

At the Wichita Police Department, EVAN ANDERSON pushes paperwork until all units are summoned to a local gas station. Once to the scene, Anderson finds that a member of the Blood gang has been shot and a five year old bystander has been killed in a gang related shooting in broad daylight (this will possibly be dramatized).

After school, Will talks to his cousin HAWK, who roams the halls with a gang of crips. Hawk invites Will to hang with him and the gang but Will tells him he has practice. As he walks to the locker room, he's stopped by Ayesha. She suggests they get together to study for science class and gives Will her phone number. Will makes it to the locker room and finds out that he's second string, Marty's backup.

Act Two - Will's father, BARRY, wakes Will up. Will has breakfast with both parents before he leaves with his dad for practice. On the way, Barry tells him how excited he is to see him starting varsity and challenging COREY's city league records. Barry gives Will money for school shoes and football cleats and tells him to find a ride after school because he and his mother will be working doubles to cover for going to Corey's game on Saturday at Butler County Community College.

At the WPD, rumors are circulating around the office of a new gang unit being implemented. Everyone (including Anderson) feels that Anderson would be next in line to head the unit. Anderson is called into the captain's office where he finds that a guy from Watts, California is being transferred in to head the gang unit.

After school, Will is caught by Coach Atwater walking the opposite direction of the locker room. Will tells him that he's not sitting on the bench and quits. Atwater tries to talk him out of it but Will leaves with Hawk. They smoke weed and make a couple stops, including the OG PICK's trap house where we find he's responsible for the gas station shooting. Pick and Hawk suggest that Will be "put on the set" since he runs with them anyway. Will thinks about it. Will and Hawk go to the mall. They steal shoes and escape after Hawk punches the clerk.

Act Three - At school, Will is confronted by Marty about talking to Ayesha. Will plays it cool until Marty mentions him quitting the team because he was second string. They get into a fight

and Will wins easily before its broken up. Barry and Katherine are called to the school, where the coach tells them about the fight and about Will quitting the football team. They are ashamed of Will and his punishment is to miss Corey's first college game the following day. At home, Will calls Hawk and tells him that he's ready to be put on.

At the WPD, DIAZ is brought in. He and the officers he brings with him all look like ex-cons. They are astonished how few leads they have on the shooting and how small the gang files are. This creates tension and Diaz and Anderson eventually have to be separated from a near fight.

Act Four - Before Barry and Katherine leave for Corey's game, they leave Will with a list of chores and tell him not to leave the house or have anyone over. Will disregards the list and invites Ayesha over. Ayesha explains that she's thinking of breaking up with Marty. Will kisses her but before they can get intimate, Hawk rings the doorbell. Will sends Ayesha home and leaves with Hawk. They go to a vacant field where Will is jumped into the gang, and beaten within an inch of his life.

At the WPD, tensions are still high. Anderson and Diaz are forced to work together on filing gang members into the system as either KNOWN GANG MEMBER or AFFILIATED. Hawk and Pick are filed in the known gang member files.

Act Five - When Will comes to, he is surrounded by his family, including his big brother COREY. Corey is extremely upset and demands answers. Will tells everyone that he was mugged on the way to the corner store. The family leaves Will to rest.

Anderson and Diaz get a tip about a possible initiation. They head over to the hospital where they find Will. They question him about being in a gang and he lies. The doctor walks in and says they will have to come back when Will's parents are present. Anderson and Diaz almost believe him until they see Hawk, Pick and a host of other crips walking through the lobby. Once back to the station, they file Will as "Affiliated."

The crips show Will love in the hospital room and give him his bandana.

Tag - Will back at school with black eye and bruises but he's running with the crips -- blue bandana in his pocket.

Appendix C - Affiliated - 2nd Draft - Step Outline

Note: Several changes were implemented in between outline stages and drafts of scripts.

TEASER

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

We see a NERVOUS TEENAGER walking with the BIG HOMIE in an otherwise empty field.

They are met by three THUGS that you wouldn't want to fuck with.

At first, they seem upset for the two guys trespassing on their turf, but then we realize that they know the Big Homie and perhaps the Nervous Teenager as well.

Out of nowhere, the Big Homie turns around punches the Nervous Teenager. The Nervous Teenager staggers back then instinctively fights back. The other three take jump in and he has no chance.

They beat the shit out of him, stomping him after he hits the ground. They run off, leaving him drowning in a pool of his own blood.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

TITLE CARD : 1985

EXT. SOUTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

FOUR DAYS EARLIER

During an early morning practice, WILL WASHINGTON (16) is outperformed in running back drills by MARTY (16). After he takes his helmet off, we see that he is the nervous teenager from the teaser.

After practice, COACH ATWATER (50) congratulates the team on completing camp and tells them to have a good first day of school. He also informs them that the varsity depth chart will be posted before the second practice after school. Season opener only two weeks away.

INT. SOUTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Players horseplay and talk trash in the locker room and showers. Will brags about how he plans to break his brother's city league rushing record. While other players indulge him, Marty listens quietly as if he knows something Will does not.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

OFFICER (or maybe Detective) EVAN ANDERSON (35) pulls up to the gas station, which is completely taped off and surrounded by bystanders. He shows his badge and enters the crime scene.

There is a wounded man, ANTAR (21) being loaded into an ambulance with a bullet wound to the shoulder - he's conscience and he screams to the top of his lungs and fights to get off the gurney.

Anderson follows the Antar's gaze to a car at a gas pump. As Anderson nears the car, he sees a red bandana hanging from the rearview mirror. He finds a DEAD LITTLE GIRL with a gunshot wound to the chest in the backseat.

Anderson storms over to the ambulance and demands answers from the Antar. He remains quiet which upsets Anderson more. He has to be separated from Antar by officers, who tell him not here. Anderson looks around and he has all of the bystander's attention.

Anderson gets in his car and peels out.

INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Anderson enters and is called in CAPTAIN McDOWELL's (50s) office before he gets to his desk.

INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

McDowell reprimands Anderson for allowing his anger to get the best of him. Anderson tries to explain that the innocent little girl is what made him lose it but McDowell says that's no excuse. Anderson says he believes that the shooting is gang-related, which would add to the increasing gang violence in Wichita. Anderson says they need to crack down on gangs before anymore people are killed.

McDowell says Antar will be brought in for questioning after he is treated. Anderson needs to have it confirmed as a gang-related shooting before they can move forward.

INT. SOUTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

The class is put in groups for a periodic table worksheet. Will is paired up with AYESHA SANDERS (16). While she works on the assignment, he flirts with her and copies her answers.

INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Anderson interrogates the Antar, who has his arm in a sling. Anderson is unable to get any reaction out of him while he talks about gang activity growing in Wichita. When he talks about the dead little girl, which is the Antar's daughter, he is moved to tears.

Anderson tells Antar that he knows the shooting was gang related and he assumes it was a Crip who killed his daughter. Antar remains quiet.

Anderson slides a notepad to him and asks for a name. He stares at the pad. Anderson tells him he won't stop until he finds justice. Antar says that makes two of them.

INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - OUTSIDE INTERROGATION ROOM

Anderson exits to find McDowell and other officers. McDowell says they have what they have to move forward. The other officers congratulate him on a job well done (he will have to find something more concrete for the praise).

Anderson chases McDowell down and asks him what's the next step. McDowell tells him he's going to the commissioner to petition for a new unit - a gang unit, completely dedicated to the increasing gang activity.

INT. SOUTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

The bell rings and the hallway is flooded with students going in every direction.

Will exits the classroom and Ayesha is waiting for him. She gives him her number and says he should call her so they can study.

As Will moves through the hallway, he runs into his cousin ROYCE HAWKINS aka HAWK (18), the Big Homie from the teaser. Hawk stands amongst a group of Crips, all dressed in blue. The Crips hit the Bloods up with gang signs as they pass. The Bloods send them back and move in but it is quickly diffused by teachers.

Hawk tells Will they are about to go smoke and hang out and invites him to come with them.

Will declines, he has football practice.

INT. SOUTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Will gets to the locker room and pushes his way through the crowd standing at the depth chart.

He gets to the front and sees that he made varsity... And he's starting... But at fullback. Marty is starting tailback.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. WASHINGTON HOUSE - WILL'S ROOM - MORNING

Will is awoken by his father, BARRY who tells him to get ready so he can drop him off at practice.

INT. WASHINGTON HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

Will comes downstairs and eats breakfast with Barry and his mother KATHERINE. Katherine is saddened by the front page of the newspaper, which talks about the little girl who was shot.

INT. BARRY'S CAR - MORNING

As Barry drives Will, they pass several homeless people in downtown Wichita. Will observes them as Barry talks about how excited he is about Will playing running back. Will can't bring himself to tell the truth.

Once they arrive to school, Barry forks over some cash for Will to get school shoes and cleats. He will have to catch a ride because Barry and Katherine are working doubles.

EXT. SOUTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - MORNING

Will gives half-ass effort at his new position. Coach Atwater rides Will as he makes mistake after mistake. Eventually, Will is replaced by another player. Will walks off the field. Coach Atwater yells after him, saying he is off the team if he leaves. Will doesn't turn back.

INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Police officers and detectives gather around while Captain McDowell addresses them. They will be implementing a new gang unit specifically dedicated to the rising gang problem in Wichita. More details to come.

As the officers disperse, they gossip about who will head the unit. Everyone agrees that Anderson is the best candidate.

INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Anderson fixes himself a cup of coffee as the beautiful OFFICER SHARON LANDRY (30) enters. She jokes around and congratulates him on the job position that has not yet been offered to him. He says he will make her dinner if she is right.

EXT. SOUTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT- DAY

As students congregate at various cars, Will talks to Ayesha. She invites Will to her back to school party on Saturday. He tells her that he will be out of town for his brother's game and won't be able to come.

Will finds Hawk in his Caprice Classic. Will tells Hawk that he needs a ride to the mall to get some shoes. Hawk agrees but he has to run some errands afterwards.

Will gets in the car but before Hawk can drive off, Coach Atwater knocks on window. He tells Will that he should reconsider quitting the team and hints that he will end up like Hawk. Will doesn't buy it and rolls up his window.

Hawk drives off and lights a joint before getting out of the school's parking lot. He passes it to Will and they roll on.

INT. MALL - FOOT LOCKER - DAY

Will and Hawk admire the latest Nikes, the first pair of Air Jordan. They pass on the Jordan's because of the red, black and white color scheme, even though it's obvious Will really wants them. Instead, they try on Nike Cortez.

When the clerk goes in the back to get another customer's shoes, Hawk talks Will into running out of the store with the shoes without paying.

On their way out of the store, the clerk grabs Will. Before the clerk can call for help, Hawk knocks him out and they run for it.

INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

As Anderson works at his desk, he is called into McDowell's office. Landry winks at him as he enters.

INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

McDowell butters Anderson up, telling him all the wonderful work he has been doing for the department. Then he tells him that he's putting him on the gang unit but he's bringing in a guy from Watts, California to head the unit.

Anderson is unable to hide his disappointment and asks why he's not heading the department.

While he has put in his dues, he has never headed a unit and McDowell questions his leadership abilities.

INT. TRAP HOUSE - DAY

Will and Hawk stop at PICK's (21) trap house. Pick is one of the gangsters from the teaser. As Hawk exchanges money for drugs, Pick tells him about how he had to shoot at a Blood at the gas station the day before. He laughs it off and says he left before he saw if he hit anyone.

Will, who is high and paranoid, is quieted by Pick's comments. Pick suggests that they put Will on the set since he's down with them anyway.

Before Will can answer, bullets fly through the windows. Everyone gets on the ground and no one is hit (or maybe someone else in the house should be hit?). Pick gets his pistol and runs

outside. Hawk, takes his gun out of his pants and follows him. Will remains on the ground, breathing heavily.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. SOUTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY

Will walks through the hall with his new shoes on. As he gets to his locker, Marty approaches him with Ayesha running behind him. Ayesha is his girlfriend and he is upset that Will and Ayesha have been talking on the phone. Will plays it cool, though he's caught off guard because he was unaware of their dating.

Will is the bigger man until Marty heckles him for quitting the football team and losing his spot to Marty. Will turns around pushes him. They fight and Will gets the best of him before Coach Atwater breaks it up.

INT. SOUTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL - PRINCIPLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Barry and Katherine listen as the PRINCIPLE and Coach Atwater explain that Will is suspended until Monday for his part in the fight.

Coach Atwater then explains his fears of Will getting caught up in the wrong crowd since he's quit the football team. This is news to Barry and Katherine and Will is ashamed.

INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Anderson and the rest of the officers are introduced to OFFICER DIAZ (30). Diaz is muscular and tattooed. In his introduction, McDowell says that Diaz has been undercover in a Mexican gang for the last couple years. Anderson is placed in charge of showing Diaz around, which he's not at all happy about.

Diaz asks for the files of all known gang members and affiliates in Wichita. Anderson tells him that the unit is just now starting so there are no files, though he has a mental list.

Diaz tells him that his mental list isn't doing anyone else any good. He sends Anderson to start compiling files with names, pictures and priors.

INT. BARRY'S CAR - DAY

Barry and Katherine rip Will a new one, more so for quitting the team than getting into a fight.

They have never been so disappointed. As Will observes all of the mentally ill homeless people on the streets, Barry tells him that he will be out there with them if he keeps it up.

They tell Will that he's not be coming to Corey's game in the morning. Will tries to argue but there's no point. They drop him off at home and head back to work.

INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Anderson reports back to Diaz with the file of known gang members. The file is small and Diaz gives Anderson shit about how small the Wichita gang problem is relative to Watts.

As Diaz goes through the file, we see Hawk and Pick both labeled as "Known Gang Members - Crip." Antar is labeled as a Blood.

Diaz snatches the files and leaves before Anderson can get another word in.

As Anderson works at his desk, Landry comes and apologizes for him being passed over, especially by Diaz, who has been a dick to everyone since his arrival. She says she would still have dinner with him if he wants. They agree to dinner at his place the following evening.

EXT. WASHINGTON HOUSE - NIGHT

Will and Hawk smoke weed on the front porch. Hawk gives him shit about fighting over a girl.

Will asks about the shooting and Hawk tells him its just a part of the game.

Will says he has decided that he wants to get put on the set. As they finish the joint, Hawk gets up to leave and says he will relay the news to Pick.

Hawk tells Will to be ready whenever he gets the call. Will sits on the porch for a moment longer before entering the empty house.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. WASHINGTON HOUSE - WILL'S ROOM - DAY

Will is awoken by Barry who greets him with a list of chores. He reiterates that Will is not to leave the house or have any company. Will asks one last time if he can go to the game. Barry has softened since the day before, but the answer is still no.

Will tosses the list of chores aside. He rolls over and goes back to sleep.

INT. SQUAD CAR - DAY

Anderson and Diaz drive around visit several of the gang neighborhoods. Everything has been relatively quiet and no one answers any questions about the double murder at the gas station.

They notice bullets holes in the trap house but nothing has been reported.

INT. WASHINGTON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Will sits on the couch eating a bowl of cereal. He watches football on TV (Maybe his brother's game though I doubt they aired Junior College games in the 80's).

He calls Ayesha and tells her he will be able to make it to her party after all if its alright with Marty. Marty is on punishment so he won't be able to come anyway. Ayesha agrees to pick him up since he doesn't have a car.

INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

An argument between Anderson and Diaz nearly ends in blows. Anderson is sent home early for his part in it. He storms out.

INT. WASHINGTON HOUSE - EVENING

When Ayesha arrives, Will is not ready. He invites her inside while he finishes getting dressed.

INT. ANDERSON'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Anderson and Landry drink wine after dinner. They both express their frustration with work before switching gears and getting intimate. They move to the bedroom.

INT. WASHINGTON HOUSE - WILL'S ROOM - EVENING

Ayesha looks around Will's room as he finishes getting ready. She sits on the bed and Will sits next to her and puts moves on her. As they kiss, there's a knock on the door. Will tries to ignore it until the knocks get louder.

INT. WASHINGTON HOUSE -EVENING

Will answers the door and its Hawk. It's time. Will explains to Ayesha that he's not going to make it to her party after all and sends her on her way.

FADE TO:

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

A group of TEENAGERS smoke weed and joke as they pass through the field. They stumble across Will's bloody body. They search through his pockets and Will comes to and asks for help. The teenagers disappear in the night.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. ANDERSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Anderson and Landry are awoken by Anderson's pager going off. Anderson rolls over and calls the number. It's Diaz and he wants Anderson to meet him at the hospital. Anderson asks what for but Diaz hangs up in his face.

Anderson starts getting dressed and Landry starts to get up. He tells her she can stay and let herself out. He gives her a kiss and he's out the door.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Will wakes up and focuses on the white lights above. Barry, Katherine and COREY (19) are at his side. While Barry and Katherine feel horribly for leaving Will at home, Corey is furious and demands answers.

Will explains that he was on his way to the corner store and was mugged. His parents accept his explanation but Corey is skeptical. Just then, Hawk comes in. Barry and Katherine are unable to hide their disdain for their nephew.

The doctor comes in and suggests the family leave Will to rest. Before leaving, Hawk whispers to Will that he will be right back with the gang.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - DAY

When Anderson meets up with Diaz, Diaz apologizes for attitude since he's been in town. He tells Anderson that he's been doing good work and to keep it up. They shake hands.

Diaz says that they are at the hospital to question a teenager about possibly being initiated into a gang. He was found in a field.

As they get on an elevator, Hawk and the Washington's get off the one next to them.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Will speaks on the phone and asks Ayesha about her party and tells her he's alright. Anderson and Diaz enter the room and Will gets off the phone.

Anderson and Diaz question Will about what happen and get a Polaroid picture of him. They don't buy his story about being mugged one bit. They show him pictures of Pick and Hawk and asks if he knows who they are. Will says no about Pick but that Hawk is his cousin.

Just as the informal interrogation gets heated, the doctor comes in. He tells the officers that they should come back when Will's parents are present.

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - DAY

Anderson and Diaz walk and talk. Neither one of them believe Will's story but without proof, they can't put him in the files. Anderson offers lunch in the hospital deli.

INT. HOSPITAL DELI - DAY

Anderson and Diaz chat as they finish up lunch. Diaz explains what it is like being undercover for so long and how it has permanently changed him. While the Wichita Gang Unit is slow paced, it's actually what he needs.

They trash their remains and head out. As they exit the lobby, the see Hawk, Pick and host of Crips entering the hospital - they just secured the evidence they needed to file Will as at least affiliated.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The gang, including the three Big Homies, show Will love and wish him well in a tough love kind of way. They give him a Blue Bandana and teach him the Crip Handshake. It's official --- Will is a Crip.

END OF ACT FIVE

TAG

INT. SOUTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Will, with black eye and bruises, stands amongst the Crips. As the bell rings and Will runs to catch up to Ayesha, we see the blue bandana hanging from his pocket.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Anderson creates a new file. He writes the word “Affiliated” in large letters. He paperclips a picture of a battered and bruised Will. He places the file in the filing cabinet.

END OF EPISODE